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The Limbaugh Letter

FOLLOW THE MONEY

THE TOBACCO DEAL

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PHOTO OF RUSH LIMBAUGH ON THE COVER BY KIMBERLY BUTLER FOR *THE LIMBAUGH LETTER*.

Disaster Relief Disaster

Remember the Disaster Relief bill in June, when the Republicans promised to keep on sending Bill Clinton their anti-government-shutdown rider … and then caved? After the President got exactly the bill he wanted — and clenched his fist in glee upon signing it — so many of you called me in utter frustration: "Rush, what are the Republicans doing? What was their plan?" that I decided to tap my vast resources to try to reconstruct for you what happened.

Here's the scoop. In May, the House Republican leadership had agreed to a strategy of attaching to the flood disaster aid bill two provisions: one to prevent future government shutdowns; the other to prevent the Clinton Administration from using "sampling" methods in the next census. An anti-shutdown rule would mean no more budget stalemates for Clinton to demagogue, as he did in 1995. Meanwhile, Clinton's census shenanigans — a clear violation of the U.S. Constitution — threatened House Republicans' majority status.

Bill Clinton called the Republican leadership's bluff.

The half dozen senior Republican congressional aides who spoke to *The Limbaugh Letter* disagreed on what, exactly, the strategy should have been, but they were completely agreed that the Republican leadership failed to conduct a communications offensive to explain the GOP position to the public and either prevent or counter a Clinton veto.

The communications snafu was apparently a result of the division among the leadership on what kind of a bill to pass. Toward the end of May, the Speaker apparently changed his mind, and called for a "clean" disaster bill. Gingrich was bucked, however, by the rest of the GOP leadership. That gave the White House a PR field day, and led to the decision, after the President's veto, to send exactly the pork-laden, big-spending bill Clinton wanted, with no shutdown or census provisions.

"Our leadership was completely unprepared," says a senior operative for a non-leadership Republican congressman. "Lott was working independently trying to cut a deal with Clinton and then feeling the heat because we never tried to sell this. They didn't have a strategy for when Clinton vetoed this thing.

"Initially, they were convinced he would never veto it," the aide added. "Then they realized he *would* veto it, and they said, 'Well, we'll just keep sending it to him.' But what they didn't realize was that we were going to be feeling heat from Clinton saying we're holding the disaster relief bill hostage." They didn't *realize?* Folks, how could you not know Bill Clinton would say that! As one high-ranking aide put it: "They're playing for keeps; we're playing for funsies."

"The thinking was that he wouldn't veto disaster relief to flood victims [just] because he wants the ability to shut the government down," said another senior aide. "The thinking was that it was inconceivable he could do that." Wrongo.

This aide is clear: Bill Clinton "called the leadership's bluff. [Now] rank-and-file conservative House members are asking, 'Where's the vision? Where are our principles?'" Says a senior aide for a congressmen on good terms with the Speaker: "Even though Clinton was complaining about extraneous riders, he had a ton of riders in there, a whole bunch of non-emergency spending, including the authorization for a parking garage in Louis Stokes' district in Ohio. All this stuff was taken out before the President vetoed it. After he vetoed it, as Gingrich was dealing with the Democrats and [Appropriations Chairman] Livingston, all this non-emergency spending was put back in. It was a horrible bill."

A senior aide within the leadership decried the communication breakdown: "The Speaker's office, which is in charge of communications, basically took a walk. His communications guy got up at a meeting of about 30 leadership staff right after the veto and actually said, 'Our strategy on this is to hide and hope for the best.' So they knew they were gonna get beat up on, but they had no plan or strategy to counter it."

Some observers — namely, me — have wondered why Republicans didn't call the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) before Congress to prove to the public that disaster assistance money was already getting through even without passage of the bill. Or if it wasn't, find out why not.

"The leadership viewed him as a political appointee of the President and they didn't want to give him the opportunity to say the money isn't flowing and it's because you're holding up the bill," according to this insider.

What is the fallout of all this? Newt Gingrich and Dick Armey are said to have patched up their differences, and all eyes are now on the tax bill. Says an aide: "If Clinton vetoes it and beats the hell out of us for giving all these tax cuts to the rich — which isn't true — and we're not able to override a veto and we're not able to deliver tax cuts, and Clinton blames Republicans as the reason for not getting a tax cut this year, people are gonna be more than upset. That's a real risk."

On the other hand, folks, maybe the Republicans will once again realize there is an army of people just waiting to be galvanized and inspired to support them.

THE TOBACCO DEAL

FOLLOW THE MONEY

A study in *The Archives of General Psychiatry* claims that women who smoke while pregnant are more likely to give birth to boys prone to "conduct disorder." According to the study, these boys turn into persistent liars; they set fires; they commit vandalism, physical cruelty, sexual aggression, and they steal. (And, I guess, later go into politics.)

So if you smoke, goes to this latest wisdom from academia, you can produce young lying, thieving, sexual predators who set things on fire.

Folks, this is where the anti-tobacco hysteria has brought us. We are now blaming criminal behavior on cigarettes. Not cigarettes smoked by the criminal himself, mind you — on his *mother's* cigarettes.

Then there's Louis Farris and his family, who are suing a West Des Moines, IA, apartment complex. The Farrises claim they were made sick by secondhand smoke filtering into their apartment ... through the electrical outlets. They are seeking medical expenses and other damages because their *neighbors* were cigarette smokers.

The emotional frenzy concerning this whole tobacco issue is such that millions of Americans have allowed themselves to become convinced that the most dangerous entity on the planet is a cartoon figure: Joe Camel. So they cheer when the federal government steps in to give an American company a direct order not to use a certain *drawing*, for goodness sake, when they advertise. They celebrate when an American industry is targeted with unprecedented fines, taxes, and regulations. "Hip, hip, hooray! The government killed Joe Camel. Rah, rah! Punish those eeevil cigarette makers. Hit 'em again, harder, harder!"

Which is why the tobacco companies surrendered in June, agreeing to pay $368.5 billion — in what has been called the tobacco "deal." But it isn't a deal. It's a shakedown.

The fact is, my friends, this settlement proposal isn't what it seems. The federal government's move against tobacco isn't about what you think it's about. It is not about public health. It is not about teen smoking. It is not about protecting people from danger. It is not about "the children."

THE TOBACCO DEAL IS NOT ABOUT PUBLIC HEALTH. IT IS NOT ABOUT TEEN SMOKING. IT IS NOT ABOUT PROTECTING PEOPLE. IF YOU BELIEVE IT IS, YOU'VE BEEN DUPED.

If you believe it is, you've been duped. Along with millions of your fellow citizens.

I know the magnitude of the deception that has occurred because of the volume of mail I get whenever I touch on this subject. This from my own audience — the most politically astute group of citizens in the country. And yet even some of you, I am sad to report, have lost the ability to respond rationally. Science goes out the window, logic goes out the window (as does, sadly, the will to defend certain Constitutional rights). You can no longer hear what is actually being said, or understand what is meant. When the words "tobacco" or "cigarettes" are uttered, those of you who have been successfully programmed to respond emotionally send me angry e-mail: "Stop defending smoking, Rush!" I'm not. "Why are you so obsessed with tobacco?" I'm not obsessed with tobacco; I'm obsessed with freedom. And I'll explain it as often as it takes. I'm going to keep on talking about this and writing about it and analyzing this until I get through to you all just what is at stake here.

Let me first enlighten you, my good friends, about how this tobacco "deal" got put together. Butt Man was just a twinkle in Craig Livingstone's eye when the scheme was hatched by a select few politically connected "legal entrepreneurs" mining the rich vein of shaking down politically unpopular industries. (Those selling breast implants, and asbestos, for instance — where less than 40 percent of the settlements actually trickled down to victims; the rest went to lawyers.)

These lawyers now stand to personally make *$50 million each* — and perhaps much, much more — as a result of the tobacco deal they concocted. "The largest lawyers' fees in the history of the world," predicts class-action expert Lester Brickman. State governments will also rake in billions each — while the political power of the participating politicians, celebrated as heroes, is greatly enhanced. Enormous wealth and political power: that's the combination at the center of it all, my good friends. As I always say, *Follow the money.*

I introduce to you the fabulously rich plaintiffs' attorney Richard F. Scruggs, from Pascagoula, Mississippi. Scruggs, who made oodles of money from asbestos suits, was instrumental in devising the strategy here, based on what all agree are "novel" legal theories. He, though a Democrat, is also Trent Lott's brother-in-law.

Scruggs' buddy and former law school class-

Continued on page 15

The Rush Jury Question

For years I have been telling you of the enormous reach and societal significance of the Rush Limbaugh program. Yes, it's the most popular radio show in the history of mankind. But it's also much more.

When you listen to my program on a regular basis, you become an informed individual. The EIB network arms you with the facts and analysis you need to be an influential citizen who can persuade others in the correct evaluation of information and events, so the proper course of action is taken. From my show you can glean good judgment, as well as good cheer.

Now we have proof of this — legal proof. Hard evidence. Courts around America have decided that this program is one of the best yardsticks for juror selection. Potential jurors are actually being asked by lawyers if they listen to the Rush Limbaugh program. And their answer can often determine whether they get chosen.

It was seen in the Timothy McVeigh case this year. The 40-page questionnaire would-be jurors had to fill out for the Denver-based case asked them if they listened to talk radio. A "yes" reply ignited further questions from lawyers about which radio hosts they listened to and what they thought of them.

Juror No. 12 in the McVeigh case was a married, computer programmer for the government, who "shares some of Rush Limbaugh's views," according to press accounts. During jury selection in the McVeigh trial, *The San Antonio Express-News* reported: "Another potential juror, a devout Catholic and Rush Limbaugh fan whose doctoral thesis deals with the philosophical underpinnings of science and theology, dazzled and dismayed the judge and lawyers with his highbrow — and sometimes tart — answers. Several times, he said he was being asked questions with flawed wording."

Lawyers are being dazzled wherever the Rush Question is asked. It was asked in jury selection in Little Rock, Arkansas for the fraud and conspiracy trial of Clinton cronies Gov. Jim Guy Tucker and Jim and Susan McDougal. When lawyers in that case were examining one juror who listened to my program only occasionally, they were intent on making sure that the juror didn't agree with everything I say. Of course, these same lawyers failed to screen out a 31-year-old woman who showed up to trial every day wearing a Star Trek uniform and espousing the wisdom of the planet Vulcan.

Lawyers have, in fact, been asking the Rush Question for years.

It was asked in 1993, for example, in a retrial of a Miami police officer, *The Washington Post* reported: "Based on questions answered during their selection, the six-member jury is seen as conservative, religious and generally pro-police. Jurors ... said their heroes include Rush Limbaugh, Thomas Jefferson and Jesus Christ."

But the Rush Question is not just a simple tool of lawyers interested in determining the ideology of jurors. Smart prosecutors know that an active Rush Limbaugh listener will be a quality juror.

"I never thought I'd be searching for people who thought Rush Limbaugh was their hero," Jackson County, Missouri Prosecutor Claire McCaskill, a Democrat, told *The Kansas City Star* in 1993 as she discussed jury selection for a death penalty case.

McCaskill is a popular two-termer who strongly supports the death penalty and is expected to run for statewide office in the year 2000. She told *The Limbaugh Letter* that *you* are her kind of people — especially if you participate in the program.

"The dynamics within a jury are sometimes as important as what the people on the jury believe," McCaskill told us. "You could get 10 people who had never written a letter to the editor, have never called into a talk show, have never belonged to any clubs, have never been active in any organizations, and those 10 people could be influenced by two people who call into talk radio all the time."

Listeners of this program are leaders, whether within a jury deliberation room or in society at large. But lawyers should beware, because such well-versed, dynamic individuals cannot be easily pegged.

Dan Wolfe, director of jury research for Forensic Technology Inc. in Chicago, which conducted jury consulting in the O.J. Simpson trial, warns lawyers not to base their assessment of a juror on "stereotypes" about, say, listeners to my program. "You really have to look at the collective of questions asked in terms of building a profile rather than just one question. Oftentimes attorneys think 'This is my dynamite question. If they answer this way, they're gonna be this way.'" As I've told you countless times, my program inspires *thought.* I have analytical, engaged individuals in my audience who think for themselves — despite attempts by critics to stereotype you as mind-numbed robots. Of course, some in the legal community don't *like* people who think for themselves.

Which makes the Rush Question a double-edged sword. Kansas City defense lawyer Charles Brown, who opposed McCaskill on a high-profile death penalty case, said of "the Rush Limbaugh supporters" on that jury that he was happy the question was asked. "I'd rather know they're there than get blindsided. I tried to get rid of them," he told *The Kansas City Star.*

It all proves that the world is becoming increasingly divided between those engaged in the relentless pursuit of the truth and those not. And there's an easy way to find out who's who. Just ask the Rush Question. ■

NEWS DIGEST

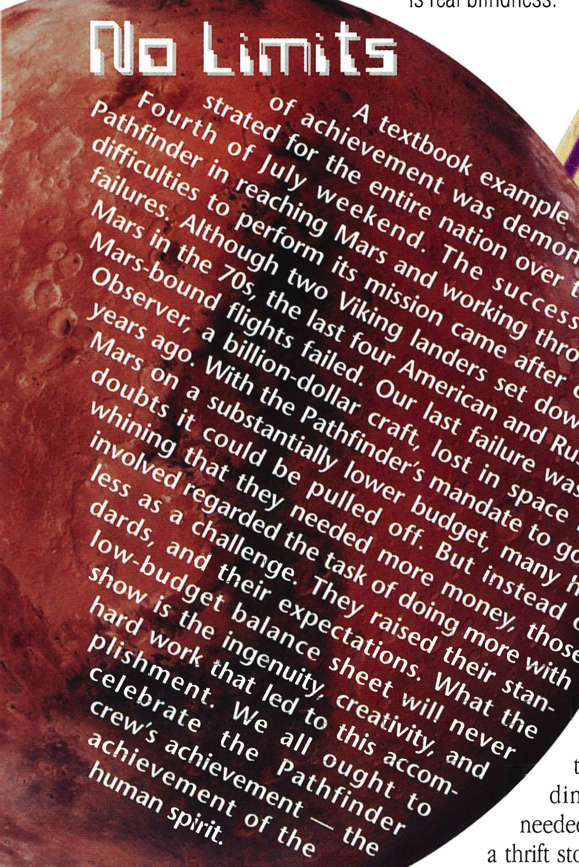
Boo, Mr. Magoo

The National Federation of the Blind has asked Disney to cease production on a new Mr. Magoo movie, charging that the cartoon figure is an insult to the blind. "The Disney people have dragged Mr. Magoo back from richly deserved obscurity in the hope that Americans will think it's funny to watch an ill-tempered and incompetent blind man stumble into things and misunderstand his surroundings," said Marc Maurer, president of the organization. Other members of the group blame the cartoon for taunts they suffered in childhood: Barbara Pierce of Oberlin, Ohio, says the character kept her "from trying to do new things or reaching out to try to do more because I was so afraid I would miss a visual cue and behave like Mr. Magoo." Marie Cobb of Baltimore agrees: "Mr. Magoo did a great deal of damage to my image of myself as a human being."

Folks — has anyone noticed that more and more idiots in America are afraid of cartoon characters? I hear you saying, "Don't be so insensitive, Rush" — but yes, you are an *idiot* if you allow yourself to be held back in life by a cartoon! That, my friends, is real blindness.

Get a Grip

According to a report in *The Spectator* of London, the Sports Minister, Tony Banks, a member of the British Labour Party cabinet, has attacked the coverage of women's tennis at Wimbledon as "soft porn." He was referring to the BBC cameramen's supposed refusal "to keep their lenses above female players' waists." Banks complains that the media "concentrates on their underwear and figures," alleging that this constitutes sexist behavior. *The Spectator* protests: "It is only gracious that women tennis players should be allowed to show off, uncensored, figures hard-won in the gym and on the courts." The paper correctly points out that Banks's remarks are "not necessarily those of a feminist sympathiser, but rather of a hopelessly old-fashioned killjoy." Like liberals everywhere.



No Limits

A textbook example of achievement was demonstrated for the entire nation over the Fourth of July weekend. The success of Pathfinder in reaching Mars and working through difficulties to perform its mission came after costly failures. Although two Viking landers set down on Mars in the 70s, the last four American and Russian Mars-bound flights failed. Our last failure was the Observer, a billion-dollar craft, lost in space four years ago. With the Pathfinder's mandate to go to Mars on a substantially lower budget, many had doubts it could be pulled off. But instead of whining that they needed more money, those involved regarded the task of doing more with less as a challenge. They raised their standards, and their expectations. What the low-budget balance sheet will never show is the ingenuity, creativity, and hard work that led to this accomplishment. We all ought to celebrate the Pathfinder crew's achievement — the achievement of the human spirit.

Just Reward

Whenever you are tempted to feel pessimistic about the country, I want you to think about this story.

Alan Brown, 31, from Lindenwold, N.J., recently lost his job as a school custodian. His unemployment ran out in May. His wife lost her job as well when the store in which she worked closed. They have a three-year-old daughter.

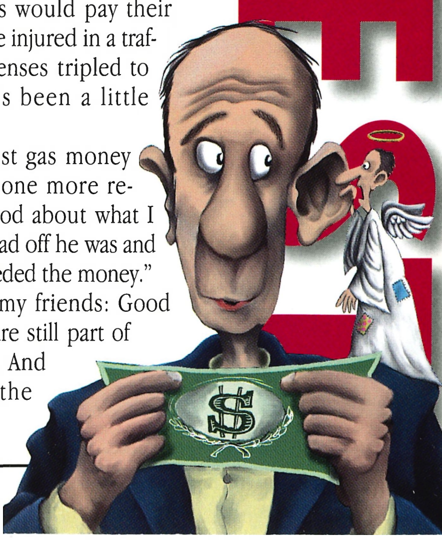
Last month, after getting an invitation to a nice dinner, Brown decided he needed a nice suit. So we went to a thrift store and bought a used one for $15 — leaving him just $6 to his name. After the dinner, he reached into one of the pockets for a cigarette and found a $10,000 savings bond. The owner's address was on the bond, and Brown wrote to him about his find. "I must admit I was thinking maybe there is a nice reward in this," he said.

Here is the response Brown got, from one George Sisak: "I have a tendency of hiding things and don't know where I put them. If you feel it is rightfully mine, I thank you for being honest. If not, let your conscience be your guide. P.S. I am 84 years old and live in a convalescent home."

Brown got a ride to the Manor Care Health Services facility in Pottstown, PA where he found Sisak, a former supermarket butcher, and his 84-year-old wife, Johanna. Sisak said he had given the suit away before they moved to the center. The couple thought their savings and Social Security checks would pay their way, but after they were injured in a traffic accident their expenses tripled to $4,000 a month. "It's been a little rough," says Sisak.

Brown's reward? Just gas money for the trip. Oh, and one more reward: "I feel pretty good about what I did after hearing how bad off he was and how much he really needed the money."

Always remember, my friends: Good guys like Alan Brown are still part of the fabric of America. And on them, hope for the future securely rests.



NEWS

Sound Familiar, Paula?

to Mr. President... WD

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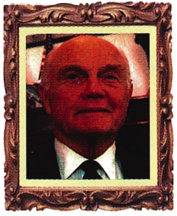
Now *here's* an intriguing item from the mainstream press. In a story titled, "DON'T GET BETWEEN BILL AND A BABE," the July issue of *Washingtonian* magazine reports that President Clinton thought a photographer was a secret service agent — and gave him a mission. He asked *Newsweek* photographer Larry Downing to get the business card of an "attractive woman" Clinton had just met at the White House correspondent's dinner.

Downing got the woman's card, but then figured he'd better check with a secret service agent before handing it to the President. A "look of anger" came over Clinton. "You don't have to ask permission when I tell you to do something," he said. "This is my life, and nobody's going to tell me what to do."

Makes you wonder what secret service agents are expected to do these days.

Five Questions for John Glenn



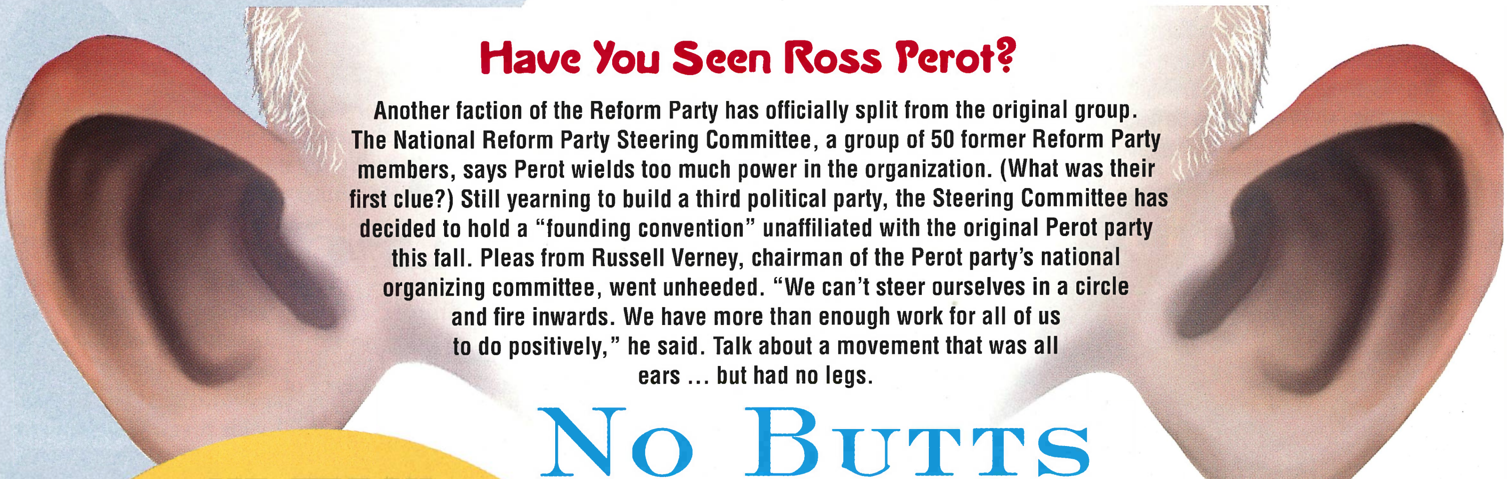
1. What discussions have you had with the White House about the Senate campaign fundraising hearings, and with whom at the White House have you spoken?

2. What information has been shared with you by the White House that has not been shared with Chairman Thompson and the full committee?

3. Will you release to the public any information given you by the White House so that we, the American people, can determine whether you and the President are upholding your sworn duty to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution?

4. Have you, or any of your committee, or personal staffers, or any of your Democratic colleagues had contact with any potential witnesses without the knowledge of Chairman Thompson?

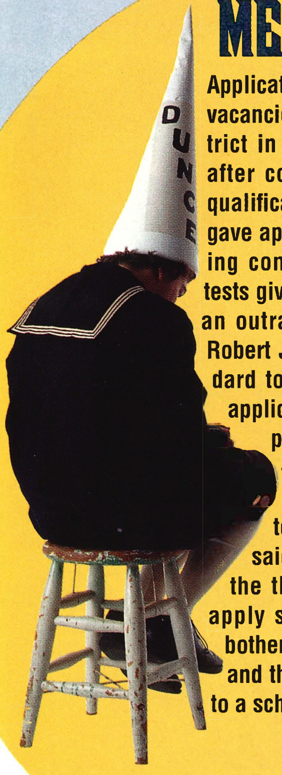
5. Will you consent to the committee expanding its investigation into "soft money" and "improper" campaign activities to include your 1984 presidential election and the continual rolling over of your $3 million debt by your creditors and bankers?



Have You Seen Ross Perot?

Another faction of the Reform Party has officially split from the original group. The National Reform Party Steering Committee, a group of 50 former Reform Party members, says Perot wields too much power in the organization. (What was their first clue?) Still yearning to build a third political party, the Steering Committee has decided to hold a "founding convention" unaffiliated with the original Perot party this fall. Pleas from Russell Verney, chairman of the Perot party's national organizing committee, went unheeded. "We can't steer ourselves in a circle and fire inwards. We have more than enough work for all of us to do positively," he said. Talk about a movement that was all ears ... but had no legs.

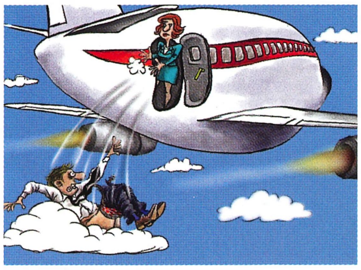
ME TEECH



Applications poured in for just 35 job vacancies at the Connetquot school district in Long Island, NY. But this time, after complaints from parents about the qualifications of some teachers, the district gave applicants a test: 50 multiple-choice reading comprehension questions from statewide tests given to 11th graders. "We didn't think it was an outrageous standard for the teachers," said Robert J. Long, district superintendent. But a standard too lofty for most: only *a quarter* of the 758 applicants passed. "To be honest, I thought more people would get 40 or more correct answers — after all, these are people that have baccalaureate degrees and state certification to teach, and some have a master's," Mr. Long said. "I was a little surprised." I'm not. Sadly, the three-quarters who failed ... will simply apply somewhere else — where no one will bother with a reading comprehension test — and they'll be hired. Coming soon, perhaps, to a school near you.

NO BUTTS

Some of you think I go overboard when I use the term "anti-smoking Nazis." Well, you oughta ask Manhattan businessman Raviv Laor what he thinks. Laor, 27, says the crew of a Newark-bound Air France 747 dragged him out of the lavatory — pants down — falsely accusing him of smoking. According to a civil suit filed in Manhattan Supreme Court, 20 minutes after the plane took off from Paris on May 19, crew members smashed open the locked washroom door and "assaulted" him. The suit alleges: "The crew members then, while Laor was naked from the waist down, dragged him outside the lavatory, exposing his genitals and other body parts to many seated passengers, both female and male," Laor told *The New York Post*. "They told me I had endangered the plane by smoking in the bathroom. I am a non-smoker. I don't smoke and I don't drink." He said the crew investigated and told him the alarm had gone off by mistake. (Air France had no comment on the $12 million lawsuit.) Laor says the attendants "threatened to have me arrested because I was screaming." He says an airline employee complained to him that "Americans are always screaming about their rights."



If only that were true, my friends.

ALL ILLUSTRATIONS BY MIKE SHELTON FOR *THE LIMBAUGH LETTER*; PHOTO OF MARS AND THE PATHFINDER COURTESY OF NASA.

DIGEST

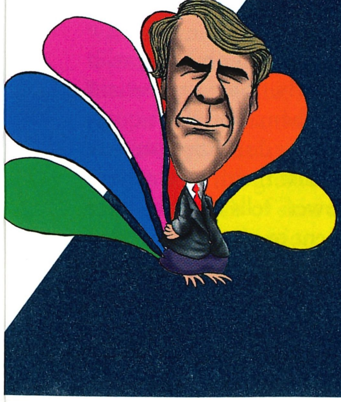
Too Much Freedom?

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

I thought I'd quote the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, in all its simple eloquence, because many Americans have apparently forgotten what it's worth. According to a poll published last month in *The Chicago Tribune*, nearly a third of Americans believe the First Amendment is too lenient. I kid you not. Of those surveyed, 55 percent said the guarantees were about right, and eight percent said the amendment did not go far enough. But sadly, 27 percent said the First Amendment went too far in the rights it guarantees. Even sadder, perhaps, is that 11 percent said they did not know. Statistics that perhaps go a long way toward explaining the widespread public apathy — as freedoms are eroded left and right.

Chi-Com Finder

In July, Rep. Dan Burton (R, IN), who heads up the House campaign fundraising investigation, asked China to help him find Charles Yah Lin Trie. The Government Reform and Oversight Committee subpoenaed Trie, an American citizen, in February. Burton wants to question Trie about news reports that Trie may have received $1 million in foreign wire transfers. Burton says "some or all of that" may have been funneled to the Democratic National Committee or to Bill Clinton's legal defense fund. So in a letter to China's Ambassador Li Daoyu, Burton formally sought the Chinese government's assistance in tracing Trie, last seen in Shanghai. Of course, Burton is asking the wrong guys. He should ask Tom Brokaw and NBC! When they want to interview Trie for the Nightly News, they have no problem finding the guy.



Twinkie Tax

I joked about it months ago, and now it's here. In a recent edition of the journal *Addictive Behavior,* Yale psychologist Kelly D. Brownell and graduate student E. Katherine Battle propose a tax on fatty foods. Since on any given day over 7 percent of Americans are eating at fast food restaurants, this could be quite a windfall. Claiming that obesity incurs some $40 billion a year in public-health costs, Brownell and Battle propose spending the fatty-food-tax proceeds to promote exercise and nutrition education. They also want to regulate junk-food advertising, complaining that the average child sees 10,000 food commercials a year, 95 percent of them for junk food and sugared cereals. Well, now that the anti-pleasure Nazis have killed Joe Camel, can Tony the Tiger be far behind?

Feminist Fantasy

Because she's been doing such a bang-up job for them, Patricia Ireland was re-elected last month to a second four-year term as president of the National Organization for Women — or as I prefer, the National Association of Gals. In what must have been a mighty shout, some 500 attendees at the NAG Gang's annual conference in Memphis re-elected Ireland on a voice vote. Ireland immediately announced the group's "Victory 2000 campaign," aiming to elect 2,000 feminist candidates to office by the year 2000. But I want to know: How do they expect to elect 2000 feminists, "at all levels of the political system," as they say, "from the school board on up," — when they can barely manage to get 500 to come to their convention?

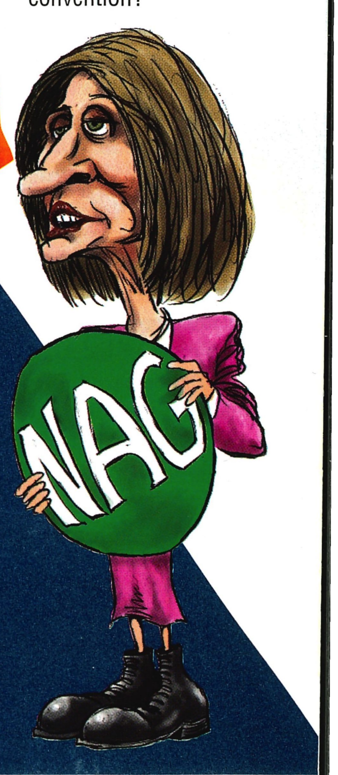


Photo of Tennis Racquet Courtesy PhotoDisc Inc, Photo of John Glenn Courtesy AP/Wide World, Photo of Constitution Courtesy Archive Photo

My Conversation With

Ward Connerly

It was my privilege to speak with Ward Connerly, University of California regent and chair of the American Civil Rights Institute — and the single most important figure in the success last year of California's Proposition 209, getting rid of official state racial preferences.

Rush: I feel exasperated for you sometimes, Ward, knowing what you've bitten off here, and what you're going through.

Connerly: I'll tell you, my friend — it's something that upon reflection I'm not sure I would do over again.

Rush: Now, that's interesting.

Connerly: I think the price is one somebody had to pay at some point. I just don't know that it's worth the personal toll. I have learned to live with the insanity of "the preference cartel" and some of their attacks, but it does exact a heavy, heavy price on your family life. My wife is not a happy camper about all of this, and it requires an awful lot of time from my business.

> "All you have to do is to threaten the 'R' word — you don't have to use it — and people will back off on this issue."
>
> — WARD CONNERLY

Rush: To what extent have you become a lone warrior now, as opposed to thinking when you started all this that you had an army behind you?

Connerly: I had never suffered from that delusion. I just did not anticipate the degree of the venom. I also expected more support from my own party, which did not materialize. There are individuals who came forward, Rush, and the California Republican party supported us. But when you get to the national stage you can look long and hard and not find an awful lot of strong-willed people on this subject.

Rush: Yes — and on other subjects, too. Now, you were very successful in California; Prop 209 won big, despite all the efforts mounted against it. You could have sat back and said, "All right, I've succeeded. I'm going to let this play out elsewhere in the country." What made you say, "I'm going to take this on nationally"?

Connerly: The problem really is national. The University of California, for example, is a recipient of major sums of money from the federal government. Many of our state governmental bodies are the recipient of federal dollars. And the feds have a way of grabbing you by the throat on the use of federal money. While it would have been a sweet victory just to confine this to California, I realized that the job was not done. And unless there was someone to drive this issue, unless somebody said, "I'm going to see this thing through," the Jesse Jacksons and the Maxine Waterses and others at the end of the day could very well prevail — because we have more political cowards per capita nowadays than probably at any time in our history. So all you have to do is to threaten the "R" word — you don't have to use it — and people will back off on this issue, Rush. There has to be somebody to drive it.

Rush: I don't think there's anybody better suited than you are. In your recent appearances on "Meet the Press," there were questions I thought would have pigeonholed many advocates of your position, but you were undaunted. I think you always win when you put the issue in moral terms, which you do.

This, in fact, came up at the luncheon we attended at William F. Buckley's home, when some members of the media were there to get to know you. The question was put to you about ending racial preferences gradually, and letting time take hold. You came back and said, "No, no. We can't do that, because racial preferences are immoral. I don't care about the political implications or the day-to-day political realities. We're dealing with an immorality here that must be corrected." I think it's an unassailable position.

Connerly: That has to be the position. Dr. King in the 1960s did not really lead the American people as much as he simply pointed out one of those self-evident truths that we hold — and that is, that people should not be judged and their pursuit of happiness should not be determined by their skin color. That was a moral position. Once he simply said, "This is where we need to go," he didn't have to lead us; we knew it was what we wanted to do.

But over the years we've abandoned that moral high ground. We've embarked upon political power pursuits. When you argue that someone should get extra "points" to go to law school, or to go to the university, or to get a job, or to bid a contract, on the basis of their skin color or how their last name is spelled, that's not a moral position. So those who want to use the issue of timing, or who want to say we're going to lose diversity, they have no real ability to hold their position, because it's immoral.

Rush: Sadly, though, so much that is immoral seems to take hold. A frightening number of Americans do not want there to be moral judgments on anything. For there to be moral judgments, that means somebody has to be judging — and to be judgmental is bad. "Who are you to inflict your views on me?" Right or wrong doesn't matter anymore; just what can make you feel better about yourself. What seems to cause the fewest waves seems to be the direction people want to take.

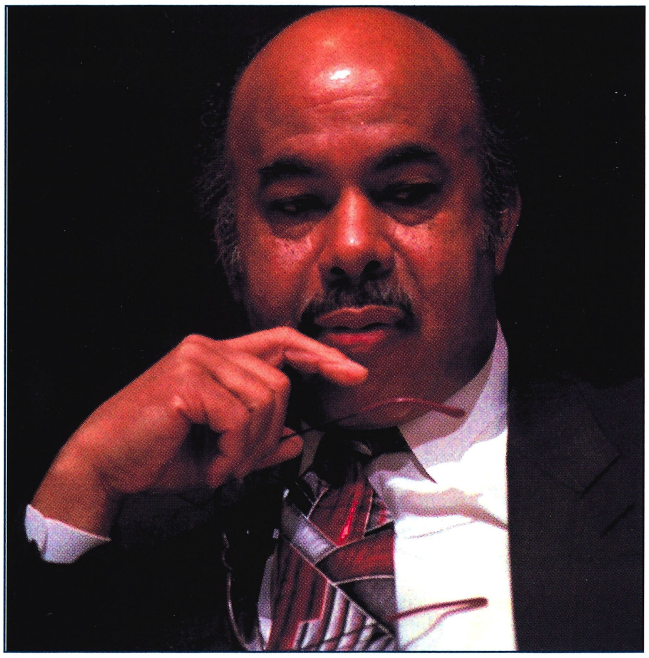
Connerly: But when our Founders said there are certain truths that we hold to be self-evident, they were essentially saying there was a moral foundation to this nation. There are certain things that we don't debate; we just know they're right.

I had a professor once at Sacramento State, Dr. Thompson, who said in his deep gravelly voice: "Mr. Connerly, there are certain things your 'knower' will tell you. You *know* them. You don't question them." Your "knower" will tell you that you don't discriminate against people, either in favor of them or against them, on the basis of something as silly as skin color. Our "knower" tells us that. Once our country starts abandoning its commitment to moral principles, then we're in big trouble — as we are, indeed.

Rush: In his commencement speech at the University of California at San Diego, the President declared he is "starting" this national dialogue on race. You wrote him a letter about this, prior to his speech. I know he didn't respond at that point. Has he solicited your views at all since?

Connerly: [Laughter] No, he has not solicited my views. And I don't expect him to do so. I have really come, regretfully, to the conclusion that the charade the President went through at San Diego was not really to engage us in a dialogue about race — which we had been having in California for three solid years now. But rather it was a rescue mission to salvage affirmative action.

The notion that he was going to plant his legacy on this issue is somewhat ludicrous. As I look at history as a political science student in college, greatness of American presidents — which is how they established their legacy — is based on three qualities: their vision; their courage; and their leadership. When it comes to vision the President, as my grandmother would say, is blind in one eye and can't see out of the other. When it comes to courage, how much courage does it take, for God's sake, to go down to UC San Diego and stand before a group of students and say, "We should celebrate diversity"? On leadership — it's not leadership to give a speech, and then like a butterfly flit to the next issue. On this issue of race, which is the raw nerve of America, if you want to guide the American people in a certain direction — particularly if you want to change their attitudes about preferences, which they abhor — your engagement of them has to be sustained. But what has he said since that San Diego speech, Rush?



AP/Wide World Photo

Rush: Very little.

Connerly: So I don't think this is really a serious effort on his part.

Rush: He's establishing what he defines as his own legacy, which he thinks will be built on the words he has uttered, not on deeds. But he said something during his speech I want to get your reaction to. And I saw it — you were there. The camera panned to you as you were listening to him. He said: "Let me say, I know that the people of California voted to repeal affirmative action without any ill motive. The vast majority of them simply did it with a conviction that discrimination and isolation are no longer barriers to achievement." Now, is that why people voted for Prop 209 in your view?

Connerly: No, not at all. That was, in his patronizing way, him trying to throw us a bone. The people of California recognize that there is still discrimination — and it's practiced by people of all persuasions. Nobody has a monopoly on practicing discrimination, or being the victim of it. But what we really did when we passed 209 was recognize that discrimination is wrong, and preferences are the flip side of discrimination.

Rush: And, by the way, Prop 209 got a higher percentage of the vote in California than Bill Clinton did.

Connerly: That's right. We passed it, however, because we don't believe that the granting of a preference, the conferring of a benefit, on the basis of skin color is an effective remedy, is a moral remedy for discrimination. You don't give somebody a benefit because they belong to a group due to something that has happened to an individual. So the President got it wrong again, as he did in many other aspects of his speech.

Rush: You were asked a question at the Buckley luncheon, I believe by Dan Rather, who cited some statistics: the number of University of Texas law school minority applicants had fallen to one or two, versus hundreds the previous year — and the same thing was going on at UC Berkeley and other places. He said that with affirmative action, with preferences, there were far more applicants who made it into the law school, medical school, etc. than would now make it. And the question was, "So what do you do, Mr. Connerly, about those people who fail to make it? What do you say to them?" What do you say to those who would have made it in the old system, but don't make it under Prop 209?

Connerly: The reason they're not making it is because they're not adequately prepared for the competition. Our nation does not grant anyone equal outcomes; we grant you the freedom of opportunity to pursue your dreams as you see fit — but you're going to have to be prepared to take advantage of them. We should not be giving someone 300 "bonus points" when they apply to UC San Diego, on the basis of their skin color. If anything, the figures that we're seeing at the University of Texas, Austin and UC Berkeley, Boalt Hall reflect the magnitude of the preference we've been giving.

Rush: Exactly. That's what you said on "Meet the Press" which I thought was so brilliant. I saw it, and I stole it immediately.

Connerly: The greater the preference, the greater the drop will be once you remove the crutch. It suggests to me that what we have been doing with the K through 12 system has been dismal. If anybody had any doubt about providing educational vouchers — if anybody had any doubt about going into black families and saying, How come you're not inspiring your kids to get off their tails and go out and get an education? — if these statistics don't prompt us to do those things, I don't know what will.

No one can make an effective case in California, with approximately 106 community colleges, one within 30 minutes driving time of every man, woman and child — I went to one — 22 state universities — I went to one — and 8 undergraduate UC campuses, that any student — black, white, green — doesn't have an opportunity to get an education. It's there. But people are not taking advantage of it in many cases. So while I don't like the drop in numbers, I don't shed a lot of tears because somebody who's gone to school for *19 years,* for goodness sake, doesn't get some extra points based on skin color to get into law school. College graduates! I don't know why we have all this hysteria about the numbers at Boalt Hall.

Rush: Because the opposition can use those numbers to impact people emotionally. This whole trend of policy by mass hysteria and emotion really worries me. In the case of ending preferences, it's only natural that there will be drops as we've had when you're reversing the preference. People have to be patient and understand that those who were qualified under preferences will need to build themselves up, as you have just said. And I wonder if our society is patient enough, and has the guts enough, to engage in the tough love necessary for these students to eventually qualify legitimately.

Connerly: I think we do. In the engineering department at Berkeley the numbers are up. In the journalism department the numbers have tripled for black kids. At UC Riverside the number of blacks in the graduate school is up 100 percent. But you don't read about that. We're finding that in probably no other area of the university have we given greater preferences than in law school. It has been the pathway for power. As a result we have given enormous preferences. We've broken the law of Bakke so many ways that it isn't laughable.

Rush: You know why. It's because that's where you end up as a judge, perhaps, and that's where true dictatorial power resides in this country. Especially for the left.

Connerly: You got it. And that is where the greatest abuse of the law, where we have discriminated against so many whites and Asians, has occurred. But in terms of the overall society, the demise of preferences is not ending Western civilization as we know it, contrary to what critics are saying.

Rush: No. It would sustain it.

Connerly: But I'll tell you where we can lose the battle. We can lose the battle if I'm the only one — and I'm not. But if there aren't other people out there making the case along with me, then it's one lone voice.

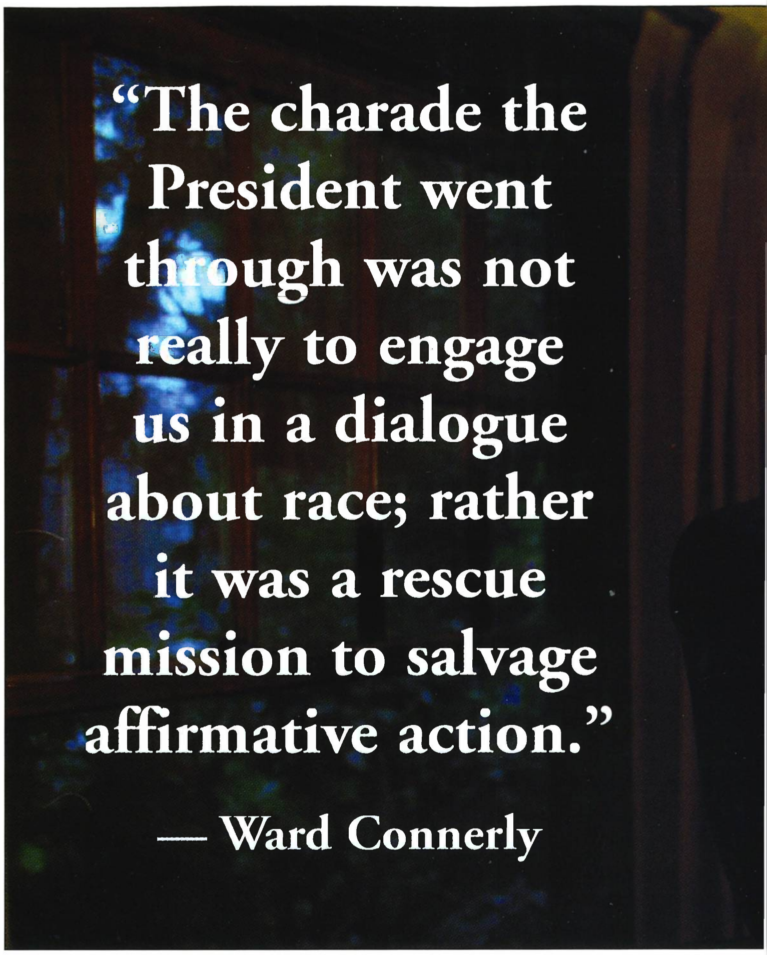
Rush: Who do you want with you?

Connerly: I want Newt there, a man for whom I have enormous respect, who will go down in history as a great Speaker. Newt has to speak out more. He's eloquent, he understands it, he should not defer to the minority members in his caucus. He did say some very positive things, from my perspective, before and immediately following the Clinton speech. But he needs to do it on a sustained level. There's no issue that touches more the fabric of what has happened to this nation, and our aspirations of what we want to be, than affirmative action. Socially, we're required to check these silly little boxes, classifying us on the basis of race, conferring benefits on the basis or race. Economically, we guarantee the outcome for some people who don't believe in competition, but who want parity; and so we economically distort ourselves because of it. Politically, it contributes to the identity politics that afflicts America. In a civic sense, it contributes to separate graduation ceremonies at Berkeley on the basis of race. In all of these things you find at the core the whole notion of affirmative action, that we have to somehow ordain the outcome of what's going to occur in our society.

Rush: That's how we conservatives have been forced to prove our compassion, Ward. You know, Newt is on the case of race; he mentions it a lot, and especially in speeches where he attempts to define the things ripping the country apart that need immediate attention. I've heard him many times talk about how we've got to fix the racial divide. But you're right, he does stop short of endorsing Prop 209, or its national equivalent, at this point in time. Instead he says we first must show that we have compassion, that we're not out to harm people. What he means, I'm assuming, is that any attempt to take away the goodies that have been bestowed all these years is going to be considered cold-hearted and cruel, and right now, we Republicans cannot afford to be perceived as cold-hearted and cruel. So in other words, be patient, Mr. Connerly, keep taking those arrows out there like the lone pioneer you are, and when the coast is clear we'll join you.

Connerly: But in the process the opposition wins by default. And I'm not critical of the Speaker; I think his instincts are right. He would like to be here — he is being cautious. But these are not times for cautious people, and on this issue you cannot be equivocal. The American people, in their gut, know what they believe. It's not the Republican party that has given me trouble; rank and file support us by 80 percent. It's been difficult to get the visible leaders. They're the ones who can command media attention, who can influence public opinion, and there needs to be more of them.

Rush: Yes, and it's frustrating. Because that army of people, that 80 percent, is saying the same thing you are. They're demanding that the guys they've sent to various state capitols and to Washington stand up and lead: "That's why we sent you there, so represent what we believe in." But they're trying to emulate the Clintonian approach of attaching themselves emotionally to people, by showing they have feelings. And while 80 percent of Americans are opposed to preferences, those getting preferences will be angry when you take them away.



"The charade the President went through was not really to engage us in a dialogue about race; rather it was a rescue mission to salvage affirmative action."

— Ward Connerly

AP/Wide World Photo

Connerly: Sure they will be, but they are in a very small minority.

Rush: But they are the minority that has been trod upon all the nation's life. And it is those people who will protest the loudest, and people will be sympathetic: "They have been trod upon all their lives, how can we continue to stomp on them?"

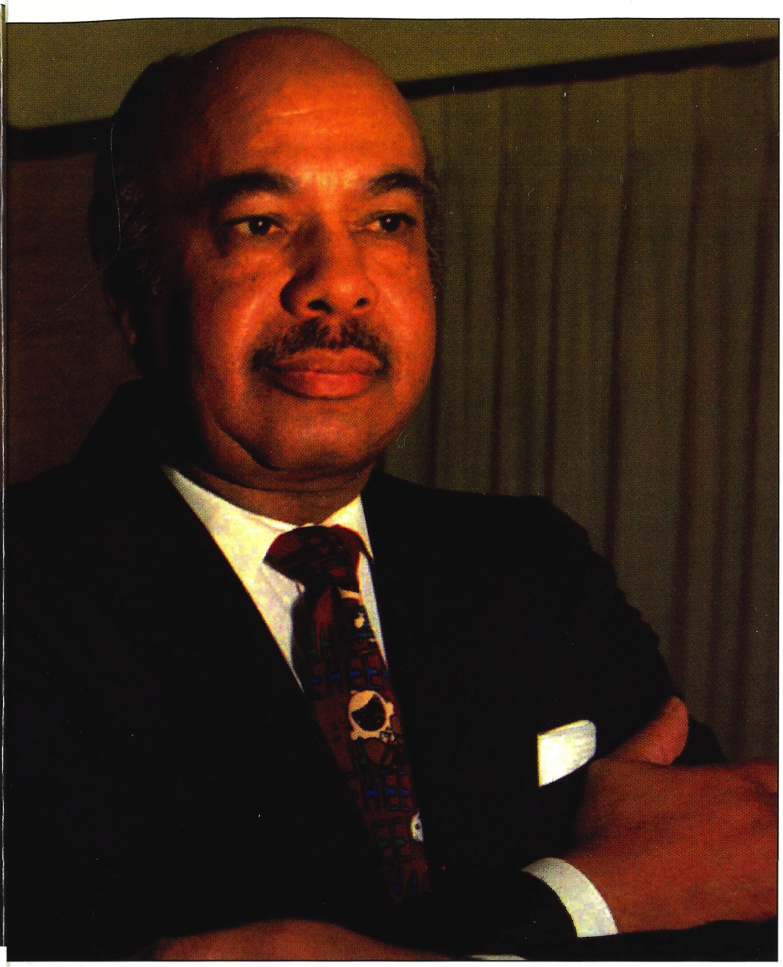
Connerly: But here the beneficiaries are *not* the weak, the poor, the dispossessed. In the college venue, they're the sons and daughters of doctors and lawyers who happen to be black. They're the contractors who get extra points and get the same contracts over and over again, simply because they happen to be of a certain racial background. These are not low income people; they're race exploiters. They should be competing like everybody else. And the evidence is abundant. All we need is more people to help make the case.

Rush: What can average people do, if the Speaker of the House and other leaders are timid at this point, to help you?

Connerly: They need to let the leaders know that their followers would like to nudge them along. I probably get 30 to 40 letters a day from people who write and say to this ordinary guy: "You're doing the right thing, don't give up on it, we're with you." We just need to have more people out there visibly saying the same thing so that it doesn't appear to be a lonely voice. We have a herd instinct. The more that people realize it's not one or two people out there who believe this, then it's comfortable for others to follow. In 1994, when I first started surfacing this issue, it wasn't a popular thing to do.

Rush: What brought you out on this?

Connerly: When I found out the degree of discrimination (prefer-



ences) at the University of California. I was chairman of the finance committee on the board of regents, and I saw a matrix that shows how we classify people. We made distinctions between Chicanos and Latinos; we were giving preferences of a different magnitude to Filipinos than we were to Chicanos, than we were to Latinos, than we were to African-Americans. When I saw that I thought the idea of classifying people this way is abhorrent. In California, we were segregating people into 15 and 16 different little groups, giving 250 points to one, 500 to another, and 1,000 to another. They were saying to the regents that race is only "one of many" factors. Only one of many factors? It was the dominant factor. When I saw that, and I saw that the administration was essentially lying to us, I felt, I cannot as a fiduciary pretend that I see no evil and hear no evil.

Rush: You're exactly right, this is the kind of thing that a group of people need to be taking on. This one needs many pioneers, not just one.

Connerly: Rush, this touches the heart of what this nation's going to be. And it's really a case where good policy and good politics converge. And for the life of me, I don't know why the overwhelming majority in the Republican party allow a handful of people to hold the party back. This is a place where the Democrats cannot go. It makes good political sense. But more importantly, it's the right thing to do. And there's never a wrong time to do the right thing.

Rush: What needs to be done now? What needs to happen nationally, legally, or in terms of an act of Congress? What's the national version of Prop 209?

Connerly: Let me tell you what I see as the dilemma. In 1963, John Kennedy and Dr. King summarized where the nation wanted to go. They had the vision which was, I think, in concert with the instincts of the American people. Kennedy said it best — he said: "Race has no place in American life or law." We then, for a very brief period, embarked upon the course of saying we wanted to become a "colorblind society." But then along about the late '60s, we began to get, coming out of our universities, the theory advanced by Cornell West, which is that "race matters," the title of one of his books, the idea that we have to use race to get beyond race. And that to become a colorblind society, we have to take into account race, so that we can "level the playing field." Then after we do all that, lo and behold we'll get back on track, becoming a colorblind society again.

We have to consciously say in our nation: "No, dammit, race does not matter. It's not going to matter in the transactions of our government." The Congress needs to say that. They need to enact a bill that says, "The 1964 Civil Rights Act, which essentially said race will not matter, is going to be the law of the land." I think we're just one Supreme Court decision away from that happening, by the way. But it's too risky for us to wait and see what the Court does, because it may be another two or three years — and we don't know what Clinton could do to the Court in the meantime.

So, the Congress, if it wanted, could say: "We're getting back on track. Race is not going to matter; the federal agencies are not going to be taking race into account." No more having people check these racial classification boxes; no more sending in annual grantee performance reports, which indicate how many of these and how many of those, based on skin color, were awarded contracts; no more asking how many of these and how many of those, based on skin color, are being hired by the University of California. That's where we have to go. We just have to be willing to take on the Maxine Waterses and say, "No, you're not going to win on this one. You're not going to browbeat us."

Rush: I would think somebody in the Republican party would love to take Maxine Waters on. What better way to define yourself than to oppose Maxine Waters?

Connerly: It just befuddles me. I'm seeing so many things that are frightening. People calling me an Uncle Tom, for example, or a "sellout." Implicit in this is that we're supposed to be choosing sides on the basis of skin color.

Rush: I think it's worse than it's ever been in this regard. You've cited Dr. King. Dr. King was an integrationist. Those in the so-called civil rights leadership today are segregationists. Partly to blame is the multicultural curriculum that gets started as early as kindergarten. Some of these kids are taught: "You don't have any hope in this country, you're hated, you've got to understand your past from another country." They're raised bitter, they're raised without hope — in the greatest, freest nation on earth. People talk about this country being racist. Things have changed. You can't have the most influential man with young people in America today be a black athlete, Michael Jordan, in a racist nation. You cannot have the most influential and wealthiest female TV personality in America be a black woman, Oprah Winfrey, if it's a racist country.

Connerly: That's right. You cannot have a Colin Powell, who if he wanted to pursue it could probably be president, in a racist nation. You cannot have a little guy like a Ward Connerly coming from nowhere in three years, and having a large segment of the American people saying, "By golly, we think he's right." I never would have had the forum to make my case.

Rush: We've just got to get enough people shouting in a loud enough voice. Look, there are a lot of people who want to help you. I'm one. I'm thrilled that I'm on your team.

Connerly: In the last three years, I've been on probably every radio show and TV show and in every publication that has a circulation greater than ten, but there is nothing that charged my batteries more than when I looked on my calendar and I saw this interview was coming up. Imagine — a dude from Rio Linda interviewing a dude from Del Paso Heights. Only in America, Rush. ■

Stupid Quotes

"ABC News has learned [John] Huang will say he knows of no wrongdoing by the President."
— Linda Douglass, ABC News
And any minute now, ABC News will "learn" that the President will say he knows of no wrongdoing by John Huang.

"I think I may have said to someone that he wanted to go to work at the DNC. I don't remember who I said that to. I wish I could tell you more."
— Bill Clinton, at a news conference in Madrid, acknowledging that he may have made a pitch to get Huang a fundraising job. AP
Remember when Sen. Bob Kerrey said Bill Clinton is "an unusually good liar"? He's losing his touch.

"There's no evidence that John Huang is anything but what he appears to be — a politically active and ambitious fundraiser who cut corners. Anything more than that is just flimsy inferences."
— James Jordan, committee spokesperson for the Democrats, quoted in *The New York Times*
*What John Huang **appears** to be, sir — unless your name is John Glenn — is an agent of Communist China.*

"Almost makes you want to go to jail out here, doesn't it?"
— Bill Clinton, during tour with Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar of Bellver Castle, a 14th century fortress and palace in Spain, when told that the castle was once a prison. AP
Don't get our hopes up.

"Some people in the United States, out of domestic political needs, are out of thin air once again slandering China."
— Tang Guoqiang, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, on Sen. Fred Thompson's charge that China funnels money into U.S. elections, quoted in *The Washington Times*
Chinese say: Thin air. English translation: Wiretaps.

"Unless Fred Thompson bites someone's ear off, this is proving to be less than scintillating television."
— Howard Kurtz of *The Washington Post*, on the first two days of hearings, on "Nightline." For the record, compare *Washington Post* headline from 5/18/73, day three of the Watergate hearings: "Watergate: Not Exactly High Drama."
So that's what the press is after.

"It was only a flickering television screen, but I will never forget it."
— Sen. Bob Torricelli (D, NJ), opening statement, comparing the current fundraising hearings to the 1950-51 Mafia hearings led by Sen. Estes Kefauver. But Torricelli was born on 8/26/51; the hearings ended five days later. Reported in *Roll Call*
Talk about scintillating television! It penetrated the womb, and scarred poor Senator Torrisilly for life.

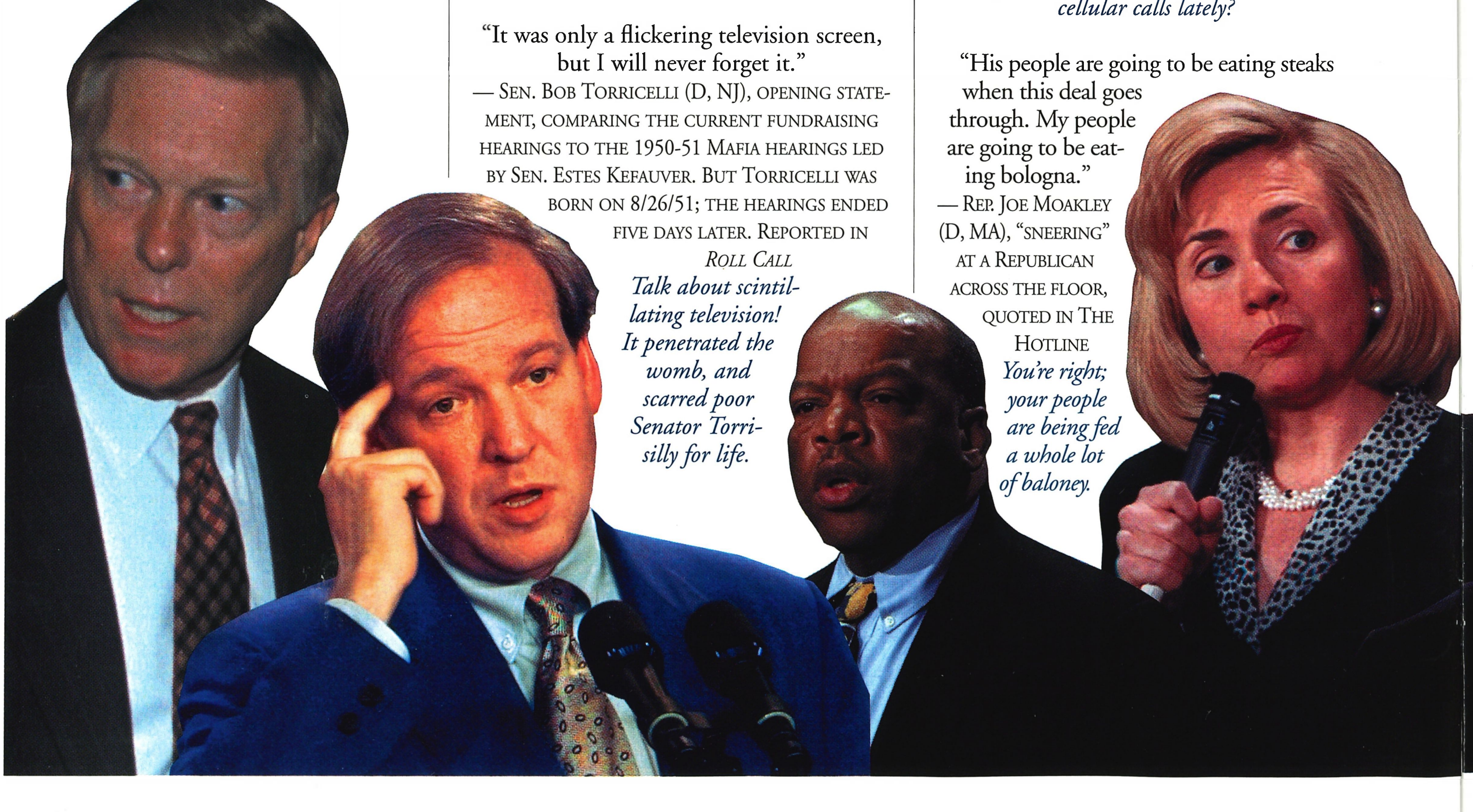
"We can make labor unions have 30 to 40 to 60 percent of this country's workers again."
— Rep. Dick Gephardt (D, MO), to United Steelworkers, C-SPAN
¡Viva Che Gephardt!

"I often ask those who say, What does art have to do with the federal government: What do we have to do as people to demonstrate who we are, except through art, except through culture, except through an understanding of what binds us together?"
— Hilary Clinton, attempting to defend federal funding for the arts, UPI
Except through meaningless gobbledygook?

"They [Republicans] give the tax breaks to the people who don't need them. The tax-break fairy shows up on the floor, sprinkling tax breaks across America."
— Rep. Edward Markey (D, MA), during House debate on the bill to cut taxes $85 billion over five years, AP
*No, Barney Frank is for tax **increases.***

"If Republicans were not writing this lopsided tax bill into law, we would call it robbery."
— Rep. David Bonior (D, MI), House Minority Whip, on tax cut bill, AP
And speaking of felonies … heard any good cellular calls lately?

"His people are going to be eating steaks when this deal goes through. My people are going to be eating bologna."
— Rep. Joe Moakley (D, MA), "sneering" at a Republican across the floor, quoted in The Hotline
You're right; your people are being fed a whole lot of baloney.



"The Republicans, if this bill passes and becomes law, will drag this economy down so that we'll be a banana republic."
— Rep. Bob Matsui (D, CA), during House debate on the bill to cut taxes $85 billion over five years, AP
And then we'll all talk about capitalist greed...

"Capitalist greed is the principal cause of the unjust world and of the severe damage to nature which is threatening the survival of humankind today. It is absurd to try to cure those evils with blind worship of market, with more selfishness, with more capitalism."
— Ricardo Alarcon, speaker of Cuba's parliament, castigating the United States as the world's greatest polluter, at the U.N Earth Summit
Tell me this guy didn't sell a few Cuban cigars on the side when he was in New York for this stupid summit.

"Scientists warn that if the trend continues, the seas will rise two feet or more in the next century. In America, that means 9,000 square miles of Florida, Louisiana and other coastal areas will be flooded ... We can expect more deaths from heat stress."
— Bill Clinton, at the U.N. Earth Summit, predicting crop-destroying droughts and floods as atmospheric concentrations of manmade gases climb, AP
There goes Cuba.

"It blurs the line between fact and fiction and erodes the credibility of journalists."
— Eric Ober, former president of CBS, on CNN reporters appearing as themselves in the alien space movie "Contact," quoted in *The Wall Street Journal*
What if they had appeared as aliens?

"Making false representations in order to get into position to see, report or photograph what has been concealed has been an integral part of investigative journalism for centuries."
— Nat Lewin, ABC attorney, in ABC's appeal of a jury's $5.5 million punitive damage award to Food Lion
Especially if you get a part in a really neat movie.

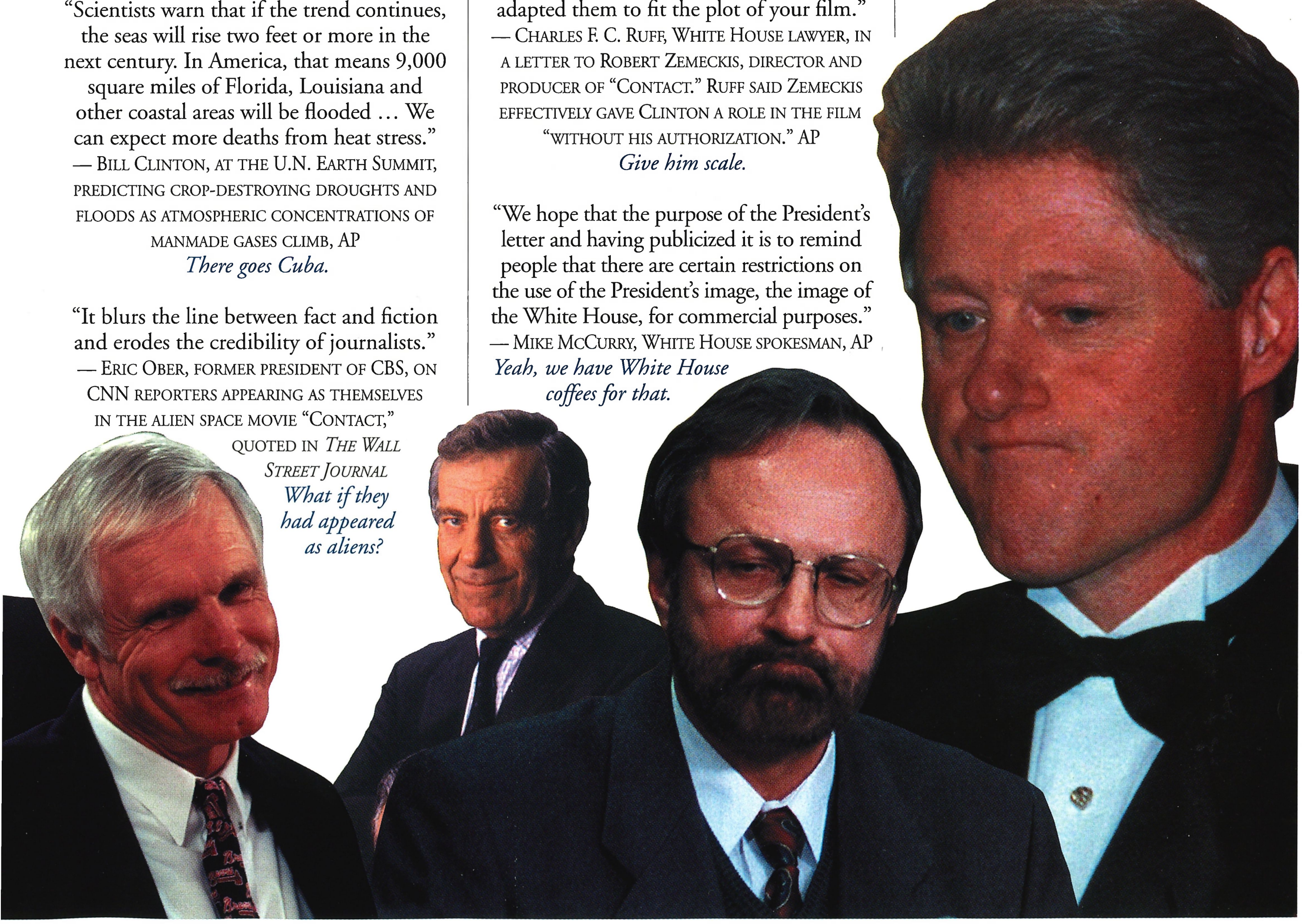
"I don't feel that I'm diminished one scintilla as a serious, practicing journalist, or that it diminished CNN as a serious all-news television network."
— Bernard Shaw, CNN anchor, on his appearance in "Contact," quoted in *The Washington Post*
Not one scintilla.

"You have manipulated images of the President's public statements, taken them out of the context in which they were uttered and adapted them to fit the plot of your film."
— Charles F. C. Ruff, White House lawyer, in a letter to Robert Zemeckis, director and producer of "Contact." Ruff said Zemeckis effectively gave Clinton a role in the film "without his authorization." AP
Give him scale.

"We hope that the purpose of the President's letter and having publicized it is to remind people that there are certain restrictions on the use of the President's image, the image of the White House, for commercial purposes."
— Mike McCurry, White House spokesman, AP
Yeah, we have White House coffees for that.

"I think in America and in the community we have to be kind and compassionate and not be judgemental."
— Rep. John Lewis (D, GA), criticizing Southern Baptists for voting to boycott Disney, on C-SPAN
This from the guy who wakes up every morning looking for a way to compare Republicans to Nazis on the Floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.

"The idiots at [Cornwall]."
— Morley Safer, referencing those in Cornwall, NY who issued him a speeding ticket, in a handwritten message at the top of the form as he pleaded guilty and paid the fine by mail. Town Justice Francis Navarra asked Safer by letter to explain himself, threatening to begin contempt proceedings. Quoted in *The Chicago Tribune.*
Pleading guilty makes liberals cranky.



All photos provided by AP/Wide World Photos

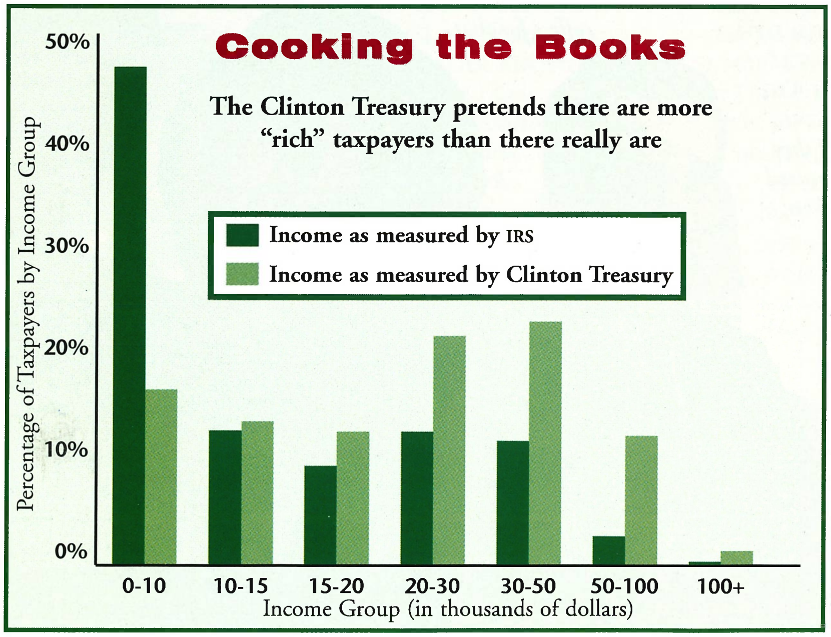
Bill Clinton's Funny Numbers

The American people haven't received federal tax relief in 16 years — not since the Reagan tax cuts of the early 1980s. Now the Republican Congress is attempting to implement just $85 billion in tax cuts over five years.

That's but a drop in the bucket in our multi-trillion-dollar economy. But what's Bill Clinton's reaction? He says the Republican plan contains "time bomb tax cuts" that risk "exploding" the deficit. He says too many rich people are getting too much of the tax cut.

Which should not come as a surprise to any of you, my friends. Anyone who has paid attention to this President's rhetoric over the last five years could have predicted his response, word for word. But this time, in addition to the usual liberal clichés, Der Schlickmeister is also using statistics from his Treasury Department to make his case that Republican tax cuts only benefit the wealthy. Stats that the mainstream media is buying hook, line, and sinker.

The numbers are phony. Clinton's Treasury has perfected the practice of factoring in something called "imputed income" — which I guarantee, you have not heard discussed by anyone but me. As you may remember when House Ways and Means Chairman Bill Archer explained it on my program some weeks back, the Clinton Administration pretends you have all kinds of income you don't really have. They do this to make it seem as if there are more rich people than there are, so they can claim that middle-class tax cuts are really going to the eeevil rich.



SOUCE: U.S. TREASURY DEPT., BRUCE BARTLETT AND NATIONAL CENTER FOR POLICY ANALYSIS

Here's how it works. Let's say you own the house you're living in. The Clinton Treasury figures out what you *would be* receiving per year *if* you were renting your home out … and adds that to your income. The fact that you cannot possibly rent out your home at the same time you are *living* in it doesn't matter. The idea is — get this — you're paying the rent to yourself. I wonder what would happen if you tried to evict yourself.

So according to the Clinton Administration, you're receiving thousands of dollars more every year than you actually earn. You're rich. (Try this one on your bank the next time you're asking for a loan.)

The Clinton Treasury calls this Family Economic Income (FEI). But as Reagan and Bush Treasury veteran Bruce Bartlett notes in an analysis for the National Center for Policy Analysis, "FEI has little relationship to the concept of income as ordinary people understand it, or even to the concept of income everyone uses on their tax returns. For this reason, the Treasury analysis offers a very misleading picture of how pending tax legislation will actually impact on people."

The "adjusted gross income" (AGI) on your tax return consists of things like wages, salary, interest, and dividends. But to further Bill Clinton's political agenda, Treasury has added imputed income to AGI, plus an array of other untaxed items. They include IRA and Keogh deductions, Social Security payments, tax exempt employer-provided health, life insurance and pension benefits, tax-free municipal bond interest, unrealized — and thus untaxed — capital gains, and retained earnings from corporate stock that are never even paid out to shareholders.

As the chart shows, this dishonest Clinton methodology makes there seem to be three times as many taxpayers making over $100,000 a year than there actually are, and over three and a half times as many Americans who make between $50,000 and $100,000 than there really are.

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott has decried the President's "fanciful arithmetic." Bill Archer has accused the White House of using "distorted" figures. But not only Republicans are crying foul. Even Rep. Charles Rangel, ranking Democrat on the House Ways and Means Committee, criticized the Administration's approach: "Imputing all the perks high-income people get to make them look more wealthy is not the proper way of doing it." A liberal calling Bill Clinton unfair! Stop the presses, folks.

Meanwhile, as the Clinton Treasury includes rent you don't really receive to make you look richer than you are, it chooses *not* to count the non-cash welfare benefits of those who live in public housing, with the exception of food stamps. Bruce Bartlett found these benefits to be substantial: "According to the Census Bureau, in 1995 non-cash benefits reduced the number of people living in poverty from 36.4 million to 27.2 million. The effect of excluding non-cash benefits from FEI is to make many poor people appear to be utterly destitute."

The Treasury's false analysis of capital gains assumes that any reduction in the tax rate also reduces federal revenues — which history proves completely false. As a result, the Clinton Treasury's phony charts make those with incomes above $200,000 appear to be receiving a tax cut four times as large as they really are.

This isn't the only funny business Clinton's Treasury is up to. It has assumed that all the GOP tax cuts take effect next year, when in fact much of the tax bill won't be fully effective for many years. That makes the tax cut seem almost twice as large as it actually is.

On top of all this, Archer also says that White House calculations assume Americans underreport their incomes when they file their tax returns. "I leave it to the American people to determine whether they, in effect, are crooks," he says.

Depends, I guess, if they prepare their taxes in the Little Rock tradition of Bill and Hillary Clinton. ■

FOLLOW THE MONEY

Continued from page 3

mate, Michael Moore, happens to be the Mississippi attorney general. (According to *Forbes,* Moore has received around $60,000 in campaign contributions from Scruggs and other attorney pals.) So Moore and Scruggs joined forces, and eventually their unique state-attorney-general-and-plaintiffs'-lawyer alliance went national. The current tobacco deal is a direct consequence.

Hopping around the country in his Learjet, as *Forbes* reports, Scruggs talked 37 other attorneys general into joining Mississippi in suing the tobacco industry. And here's the novel theory — that the tobacco industry should pay state Medicaid costs. But as my liberal economist friend James Glassman points out in *The Washington Post,* this assumes that states, as well as individuals, were helpless all these years to curtail smoking. This extends the "abuse excuse," for the first time, to governments: It claims that state governments, too, with the power to tax, regulate and legislate, were "victims" of tobacco companies. Glassman brilliantly observes: "In truth, the [tobacco] deal — an exercise in political hysteria — is a disaster for anyone who believes in preserving the prime values in American society: personal responsibility and freedom."

But there's a second set of lawsuits covered by the deal. They began with Louisiana trial lawyer Wendall Gauthier, who with $100,000 stakes from 60 plaintiffs attorneys' firms around the country, initiated class action suits in 18 states. And there happens to be another brother-in-law among this group of lawyers: the brother-in-law of the President of the United States: Hugh Rodham Jr. — who has absolutely no experience in such cases.

Don't think these nepotistic eyes and ears are participants in this deal by accident, my friends. There's too much money involved — for all concerned — for personnel coincidences. (In another fascinating connection, the millionaire legal beagle who brought Rodham on board, John Coale, is married to CNN legal commentator Greta Van Susteren.)

With public hatred for tobacco so intense, my friends, and the hue and cry for punishment of the industry nearly universal, very few have noticed the looming negatives of the deal. The astute *Wall Street Journal* columnist Paul Gigot is one who has: "The proposed tobacco deal is one of the greatest transfers of wealth and political resources in American history. An interest loyal to Republicans — tobacco companies — will be paying billions of dollars to a plaintiff's bar that shovels hundreds of thousands of dollars in campaign cash almost exclusively at Democrats."

All without one vote cast.

And that is what concerns me. There is a way to do this. There is a way to get rid of tobacco. Vote on it. Ban it through the normal legislative democratic process. But this tobacco deal has not gone through that process. No legislator has put his neck on the line: "I propose that cigarettes be banned in my district." No legislator has put his neck on the line: "I want more funding for my pet projects, so I propose that we raise taxes." Instead, what we have here is "found" money! The political drooling over the prospect by attorneys general who back the deal because it would give their states billions has become so unseemly that Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D, NJ), a liberal, warned: "Suddenly, there's this largesse out there, this pot of money, and I have to caution them all: Don't be seduced to take the money like the kids are seduced to take up smoking." Too late.

THESE LAWYERS STAND TO PERSONALLY MAKE *$50 MILLION EACH*: "THE LARGEST LAWYERS' FEES IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD."

We are told that 400,000 Americans a year die from smoking-related illnesses. And yet the government says to tobacco companies, "You can still sell the product, but you can only sell it here, you can only market it there, you can't say this, you can't say that." They want the product sold. That is the bottom line, folks. They want cigarettes sold because these greedy politicians want the tax revenue and they want the corporate profits that tobacco companies are generating to pay for their excessive spending on Medicaid and other state budget items.

I am not going to defend smoking. I'm not going to encourage it. I'm not going to promote it. I have never done so. I am not promoting the tobacco companies, I am not supporting the tobacco companies, I am not encouraging the tobacco companies. In fact, I have said on my program countless times: it's stupid to smoke cigarettes. *Don't do it.*

Yet I keep getting mail from you people: "Why are you in the back pockets of the tobacco companies?" I am not. I am simply trying to call your attention to the key issue here of freedom in a free society with a free market. I am simply saying that I am alarmed at what has been accomplished here in this whole crusade. What has been accomplished more than anything else is a financial grab and an encroachment on freedoms.

I am trying to say that the people who claim to be against smoking are not being honest with you. If they were, they would first and foremost seek to ban this product and keep it out of people's hands.

This whole thing is a sham. I don't know how much plainer I can make this. I am talking about the concept of freedom. I am not talking about smoking, cigarettes, or tobacco in a manner that implies I support it. If you want to smoke and it's legal, it's your business. That's the way I look at it. If tobacco companies manufacture a legal product and they want to advertise it, it's their business. And it's up to you to be smart enough to realize when you're getting fooled.

So what's next? Will they go after dairy products? Fast food? Twinkies? A Reuters wire story reports that the federal tax on beer would double, and it would triple on wine under a U.S. House bill proposed by delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton to tax beer and wine at the same rate as hard liquor. She says, "I do not see how you can go after cigarette smoking without going for its companion drug, alcohol." You see? They can now use the anti-tobacco strategy as the justification for targeting anything that purportedly causes health expenses. These are things that are *legal.*

That is what I'm talking about, friends: the rise in power of the federal government. The daily, incremental loss of freedoms. It's time to wake up … now that the camel's nose is under the tent.

Rush Limbaugh

To subscribe, call 1-800-457-4141

If Joe Camel is such a powerful and influential cartoon, I want him on my team (minus the cigarette, of course) as the official mascot of the EIB network. Cool, surrounded by babes, boom box in hand, listening to me.

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"Joe Camel is dead. He had it coming," exulted White House aide Bruce Reed, in the wake of R.J. Reynolds' bowing to government pressure to deep-six the cartoon figure. "We're grateful to the attorneys general for helping to bring this about. It's no accident."

President Clinton also declared victory: "This step is long overdue. We must put tobacco ads like Joe Camel out of our children's reach forever. I will keep fighting until the days of marketing tobacco to our children are over." Bagging Joe was just his first trophy.

The Federal Trade Commission still wasn't satisfied. The agency said RJR should "sign an enforceable order" preventing it from ever bringing Joe Camel back.

Now that Joe Camel has been killed by the U.S. government, tobacco companies will come up with a new, federally-approved marketing plan: "Skull and Crossbones." Or that red circle with a line through it. You'll have to cut through brown wrappers to even *see* the brand names. Scolding notes from every government agency will be pasted over each pack. Insults from Donna Shalala.

And guess what, folks. The MTV crowd will eat it up. You'll see them wearing skull and crossbones tattoos, T-shirts, jewelry. Dennis Rodman will market the product line, including $300 skull and crossbones sneakers of death.

And after we've made it harder for stupid teens to get hold of cigarettes, will that stamp out smoking? After all, we're told it's an addiction. So they'll resort to back-alley purchases, and driving to bad neighborhoods looking for "cigarette houses." Why? *They're going to do it anyway.*

ILLUSTRATION BY KEITH LOCKE FOR *THE LIMBAUGH LETTER*